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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 30 September 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GANEV (Bulgaria)

later: Mr. MOUMIN (Comoros)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar)
Mr. Sahloul (Sudan)

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Address by Mr. Adrien Sibomana, Prime Minister of the Republic of Burundi

Statement made by

Mr. Ochoa Antich (Venezuela)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. ABDOU DIOUF, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President DIOUF (interpretation from French): The United Nations would appear today to be the ideal forum for seeking and identifying solutions to the problems of all kinds that are assailing the world. It is here that modern history is being woven and it is here that ideas are expressed that plant the seeds of the future. That is both because the United Nations brings together almost every country and because the ideas on which it is based and the principles which guide it arise from our most generous feelings - the sense that we belong to the same humanity and are duty bound to preserve it.

Thus, it is always with hope that I speak before the Assembly. Today, moreover, I am speaking on behalf of Africa and the Islamic Ummah. Speaking on behalf of so many peoples is a heavy responsibility indeed, but one that is also full of exaltation because of the hopes that underlie it.

I am even happier to bear that responsibility because the choice of you, Mr. President, to guide the work of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly is a certain guarantee that it will take place smoothly and succesfully, for, in addition to your distinguished qualities as a diplomat, you come from a country whose commitment to the triumph of the common ideals of the nations gathered together here has never been in doubt.

(President Diouf)

Therefore, from the bottom of my heart I address my warmest congratulations to you. I wish you to know also, and in particular, that in carrying out your important and sensitive mission you can always count on the cooperation of the Senegalese delegation and of all those on whose behalf I speak at this session.

To your predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we pay a well-deserved tribute for his outstanding guidance of the deliberations of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. For anyone who knows the great qualities of his people, there is nothing surprising in that.

As to the Secretary-General, I am pleased to say once again how satisfied we are at seeing him occupy this prestigious post. Our fraternal and friendly support will always be with him in his efforts to ensure that the United Nations plays the full role given it by the Charter and shoulders all the responsibilities that derive from that Charter. Speaking of the role and responsibilities of the United Nations, I cannot fail to emphasize the very great hopes that his election has aroused in us Africans. Like our Arab brothers and all the peoples of the countries members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, we viewed his election as concrete proof of the universality of the United Nations. In fact, it constitutes a confirmation, following upon the mandates assumed by Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, another national of a developing country. All our best wishes are with the Secretary-General.

(President Diouf)

Thanks to the atmosphere of détente prevailing today in international relations, with the end of the cold war and of ideological tensions, the credibility and image of our Organization have been greatly strengthened. For some time now the United Nations has been demonstrating its effectiveness, in particular through the tangible results in the area of peace-keeping. It has also made significant progress in the slowing down of the arms race. In a word, what was unimaginable yesterday is now a part of everyday life, and in referring to it we now speak of a "new world order". The expression is rather explicit, because for all of us it bears upon the strengthening of international security and the guarantee of stability of international relations. But the reality contained within it must also mean, for the developing countries, a greater awareness of the aspirations of their peoples to well-being.

(President Diouf)

In view of what is going on around us, we are still far from that situation. Indeed, suffering and injustice are still the daily lot of millions of men and women in several regions. What is even worse at this time of over-abundance, when one thinks about the milk and grain surpluses, people continue to die of hunger because they do not have the very strict minimum they need. Similarly, people are still dying of diseases which medical progress has now made it possible to cure.

Moreover, from recovery plans to adjustment programmes, the economies of many countries have lost their structure and become anaemic, and their Governments find themselves virtually powerless. The case of Africa, in this regard, is tragically instructive. Its economic growth rates have remained at their lowest in proportion to population growth; investments are rarely seen and infrastructure needs are the most significant.

Here is a continent which is rich in minerals and mining resources but in which - paradoxically - most of the poorest countries are to be found.

These sorry records are explained in part, by the youth of the countries that make up Africa. But they are the result, above all, of its raw materials and other products being sold at prices fixed outside the continent and most of the time in total disregard of its interests. This situation is all the more worrying because it has persisted - I would even say worsened - despite the efforts of African leaders to improve it, especially since the beginning of the 1980s.

Thus, in 1986, when I was Acting President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), I was mandated to appeal to the United Nations to deal with our specific problems in a special way. Reacting positively, the United Nations convened a special session of the General Assembly, which adopted the

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United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD).

This document gave rise to the greatest hope because it was the fruit of unprecedented joint effort. It was, theoretically, a true solidarity pact. I say "pact" because Africa had committed itself to set up the necessary structures for launching autonomous long-term socio- economic growth and development programmes. The international community for its part agreed to help Africa achieve that goal.

This dual commitment was expressly entered into in UNPAAERD, which made it clear in particular that the international community would spare no effort to provide sufficient resources to support and complement the development efforts of Africa. That was clear.

Unfortunately, we must recognize that, while the African countries took the measures agreed upon, the same cannot be said of the international community as a whole, even if some countries of the North had a friendly and understanding attitude in our regard. Will the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADA) be treated differently, more generously? Undoubtedly it will be, if it is applied, because its commitments are firm and precise, and follow-up, monitoring and assessment mechanisms have been provided, thanks to which the two parties will be able to work together on a permanent basis. Thus, they will be able together and at regular and short intervals to ensure respect for the commitments agreed upon. It is perhaps these frequent meetings which were missing in the implementation process of UNPAAERD.

I hope that that is the only explanation for the modest results of that document. But for the time being, I note that Africa is prey to the same difficulties, some of which have even worsened.

(President Diouf)

That is the case with its external debt, the repayment of which consumes the bulk of the meagre financial resources left to Africa owing to worsening terms of trade.

Since lending countries are slow in agreeing to hold an international conference devoted to this problem, we are making an urgent appeal to all States and all international financial institutions so that together we can explore other ways to solve the problem. Otherwise, it will be illusory to expect the African countries to give all due attention to problems of common interest. Quite naturally, they will devote their energies, on a priority basis, to the struggle for the survival of their peoples. The persistence of the African debt problem could even have other negative and more immediate consequences; population movement from the South to the countries of the North have already shown that this risk exists.

To this already grim picture we must add the increasingly evident precariousness of the African environment, which is illustrated by the devastating drought which has hit the southern part of the continent, after having wreaked on the Sahel the damage of which we are all aware. We must also add to this the lightning spread of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), along with other diseases which have disappeared elsewhere, and the number of hotbeds of tension which already exist, not to mention those which may yet arise.

In this respect, it is South Africa which first comes to mind. None the less, one would have thought a few months ago that the present session would be the opportunity for the international community to rejoice over the irreversible changes since the advent of President Frederick De Klerk. But what do we see today, over and above the formal abrogation - I was going to say theoretical abrogation - of the apartheid laws?

(President Diouf)

Blacks still do not have the same rights as the rest of South African society, and violence has been omnipresent in recent months, sometimes achieving proportions which cast doubt upon the willingness of the South African Government to change. The continuation of such an atmosphere would be a serious threat to the progress we have all welcomed.

That is why at the twenty-eighth regular summit meeting of the OAU, held at Dakar, it was felt necessary to take the matter to the Security Council. In my capacity as Acting President of that pan-African organization, I should like, on behalf of the continent, to express my sincerest thanks to the members of this organ of our universal Organization for the diligence and sense of solidarity with which they responded to our appeal by adopting Security Council resolution 765 (1992), which invites the South African authorities to take the appropriate measures to end the violence.

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to repeat our commitment to a negotiated solution in South Africa and the hope generated by the recent Mandela-De Klerk summit meeting. We hope that the talks to be resumed within the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) after that meeting will make it possible speedily to harmonize the positions of the parties and make irreversible the resolute march of South Africa towards a non-racial, democratic and united society.

The civil war in Liberia is another source of concern for Africa. It is all the more worrying since it has continued even after a framework for a peaceful settlement had been drawn up by the countries in the subregion.

As the Head of State of a country member of the Committee of Five of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that was set up to resolve the crisis, I can testify to the fact that this framework was conceived with

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the sole concern of helping our Liberian brothers regain peace. After several meetings, we adopted it with the agreement of all of the parties. But the bitter fact remains that the horizon is dark because the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the centre-piece of the agreed-upon arrangement, does not have the means for its peace mission.

That is why, while thanking those who have already given us their support, I should like to ask the United Nations to provide increased assistance. In the absence of such a gesture, we risk seeing the Liberian crises continue. It is already a serious threat to the stability of the West African subregion, and in human terms it is a catastrophe with lasting consequences.

I now come to the most absurd - and perhaps most devastating - tragedy Africa has known in recent years. I refer to the civil war in Somalia. This country, once so welcoming, today is a hell on earth. It is the picture of anarchy, of intolerance in all its forms, of violence, and of the failure of man before his destiny.

Senegal, for its part, is doing everything in its power to help end this tragedy which, should it persist, would run the risk of sounding the death knell of the very existence of Somalia. It is doing so for humanitarian reasons, for reasons of African solidarity and, in brief, for reasons of common sense. It is also doing so in its capacity as a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the OAU and the United Nations.

(President Diouf)

Let me take this opportunity to note that, together with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the League of Arab States, our organization is already engaged in significant efforts for Somalia. But the situation there is so grave that we must give it high priority in the days and weeks ahead if we are not to witness the genocide of a people through the death of its children. I appeal also to non-governmental organizations; I encourage them to continue their generous activities in Somalia.

The parties to the conflict must understand that the interest of the Somali people lies in the restoration of peace, and that rivalries that sacrifice human lives by the thousand can only result in their claims becoming pointless.

What I would truly like to see is an international conference on Somalia. I therefore solemnly propose that such a meeting take place as soon as possible in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations, the OAU, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Community. The goal would be to put a rapid end to the armed confrontation and define a framework for a peaceful settlement of the crisis acceptable to all parties. The United Nations would take the initiative here, but the modalities of the meeting would be defined among all the organizers, who would also jointly agree on the list of participants. For my part, I should be represented there both as current Chairman of the OAU and as President of the sixth Islamic summit.

But I cannot stress too forcefully that while awaiting that conference, for which we earnestly wish, the international community must continue to help the victims of the confrontations imposed upon the Somali people by armed factions. In particular, it should do everything it can to ensure that the

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arms embargo imposed in Security Council resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992 is strictly observed, and should take every other possible initiative to put an end to the violence and the suffering. That wish of the OAU is shared by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, of which Somalia is a member.

My rehearsal of tensions in Africa would be incomplete without a reference to Western Sahara. I wholeheartedly wish for a settlement to that matter; this could be reached quickly within the framework defined by the OAU. Nor can I omit to mention the fragile peace in Angola and elsewhere on the continent.

Speaking of peace, I cannot fail to reiterate how much the peoples I represent here cherish peace. In our societies, everything boils down to the human being; peace is naturally one of the reference values. That was one of the observations of the sixth summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

In Africa, the Heads of State or Government of the States members of the OAU proved their commitment to peace by deciding at the most recent summit, held at Dakar, to establish a mechanism for preventing, managing and settling conflicts. That mechanism is intended to respond to Africa's desire for the means to prevent conflicts, through an ongoing analysis of situations, putting an end to those that persist in spite of our efforts. Africa is thus in step with United Nations concerns on the maintenance of peace, as set out by the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277).

That is because the Secretary-General's vision of peace is reflected today in the determination resolutely to address the continent's political and economic problems. Without a doubt, this is a manifestation of Africa's self-confidence, and proves that our continent's de facto marginalization has

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not paralysed it. On the contrary, its self-confidence has never been disconnected from the spread of multiparty democracy; indeed, without it, the current trends would certainly not be so clear.

Democracy has made great progress in Africa in recent months. Authoritarian regimes have yielded to democratically elected Governments; everywhere, confrontation is yielding to joint efforts and bullets to ballots.

Our efforts at integration derive also from our determination to take our destiny in our own hands and is an expression of our self-confidence. The same holds true for the way in which we are addressing environmental problems and for our determination not to miss the energy revolution that is appearing on the horizon. It is significant that, with respect to our commitment in that sphere, we have placed our bets on solar energy. It is abundant in our countries and can reconcile the need for healthy environment with that for development.

If these efforts can be pursued and if their orientation can be maintained - and we are determined that they should be - Africa will soon be in a position to overcome its present situation. But again: to achieve the expected effects we must have consistent support from the international community. We have seen this with the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

We know too that the solution or prevention of conflicts in Africa will be possible only if arms supplies to belligerents and other forms of outside intervention are halted. Everyone knows that democracy in Africa can be consolidated only if it is followed by progress towards, inter alia, economic growth based on a rationalization of development efforts. This requires improved relations within Africa, adequate infrastructure, and the possibility

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for African countries to ensure that their products can reach northern markets at profitable prices.

Although Africa is certainly the continent most severely affected by economic crisis, war and other conflicts, we have no monopoly on these evils: other peoples are suffering too, and we stand in solidarity with them. That is why, although I have spoken at some length about Africa, I must not neglect the tragedies being played out elsewhere.

I am far from indifferent to the economic difficulties of Latin America - like ours, caused in large part by unfair international economic relations - to the need to consolidate peace in Cambodia through scrupulous respect for the Paris agreements, and to the need for Afghanistan to take the path of national reconciliation. We in Africa are also concerned about the situation in some of the former Soviet republics and in the former Yugoslavia, as well as about the unacceptable state of affairs that continues to be imposed on the Palestinian people.

On Bosnia and Herzegovina, we approve of the initiatives to ease the suffering of the population, to halt the violence, and to put an end to what appears to be an attempt at "ethnic cleansing". As President of the sixth Islamic summit, I sent a representative ot the recent London Conference on the former Yugoslavia. I shall continue to associate myself with all steps in that direction, and I call on the United Nations to continue, even increase, its efforts.

With respect to the question of Palestine, while we welcome the positive developments in the way it is being handled in the context of the ongoing peace process under the sponsorship of the United States of America and Russia, we must observe that the process is far from meeting our expectations. But there is reason to hope that with the new Israeli

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Government significant progress will be achieved and that the heroic Palestinian people will soon be free, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to exercise its inalenable rights. We call on the Israeli Government to show realism and political courage, and we urge all parties to have a sense of history. It is only in that way that peace can be restored and that the Arab world and Israel can draw upon their rich common heritage and their vast economic potential.

To face these challenges and realize the potential that is present despite all the problems, we need greater solidarity, both among people and among nations. I am thinking of a "general agreement on solidarity". As distinct from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, this moral contract would make possible the effective implementation of all the provisions of the United Nations Charter. This presupposes awareness that we all share the same future and that we agree to bear an equal interest in the maintenance of peace, the promotion of human rights and democracy both nationally and worldwide, the struggle against poverty and the protection of the environment. There is no lack of opportunity: let us begin at this session of the General Assembly. Clearly, this would be the best way to move towards the new world order to which we all aspire.

To be sure, with respect to the maintenance of peace, the United Nations - to which we pay an enthusiastic tribute - under the dynamic leadership of the Secretary-General is making notable efforts to respond to the many demands upon it.

(President Diouf)

To be sure, in the Middle East, in the rest of Asia, in Africa and in Europe, United Nations peace-keeping forces, in most of which my country is proud to participate, are carrying out their missions courageously, loyally and effectively, and for the most part to the great satisfaction of the peoples of those regions.

We must, however, recognize that this universal Organization is not equally successful everywhere its intervention is desired and necessary. Often this is because of the Charter requirement that regional organizations play the primary role in the settlement of regional disputes, but we must realize that their effectiveness is limited in the case of armed confrontation because they do not have the means required for peace-keeping operations.

I believe that fidelity to the spirit of the Charter in this regard requires the establishment and operation of a system of co-operation between the United Nations and the regional organizations so that they may benefit from appropriate technical and financial assistance and thus can become more involved in the management and settlement of regional conflicts. I am happy to note that this is the thrust of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Agenda for peace".

In any case, this is what should flow from our concern to preserve our collective security. That is clear militarily, but it is also increasingly true with regard to the other aspects of security. No one is unaware that those aspects are equally important. Thus the strong solidarity I have been advocating, through the "general agreement on solidarity", presupposes also the resumption of the North-South dialogue. More exactly, it will be a question of engagement in a new dialogue between the developed and the developing countries. I say "new" because the dialogue would be imbued with

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the spirit of partnership and agreement to joint responsibility in facing common challanges: challanges involved in economic and trade problems as well as environment and health. The General Assembly could ask the Secretary-General to make concrete proposals along those lines at its next session.

I am among those who believe dialogue would be easier if the solidarity we are seeking to promote were indeed effective at the regional level, and it will be necessary for that to be taken into account in the efforts under way in the regional groups.

That is one of the reasons why Senegal has made the achievement of African integration, as advocated in the Treaty setting up the African Economic Community, one of its main priorities in matters of foreign policy. That explains our commitment to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). But a reminder is needed here. The OIC is not a religious organization. Its objective is to organize solidarity among its member States, whose peoples are united by the same faith and have the same concerns. It already is a very good tool for political and cultural co-operation, and it is our ambition to make it an effective instrument for economic, commercial and technical co-operation. The Dakar Summit of last December was a turning-point in this respect. Of the groups that must have our attention in the framework of the rebalancing of international economic relations, I must mention the Summit Group for Consultation and the South-South Co-operation Group, the so-called Group of 15, whose goal is to make South-South co-operation effective through the drawing up and

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implementation of specific projects. But I hasten to make it clear that that group is not a closed club; indeed, everything that is discussed there is at the disposal of the other developing countries; nor does it claim to be a spokesman for the entire South. However, I am convinced that it does constitute a framework for the definition of the common concerns of the countries of the South with regard to specific questions, and for the expression of their views. Moreover, it has drawn up and circulated a position paper on the new world order.

Returning to the North-South dialogue - and to the "general agreement on solidarity", which should promote the dialogue - while belief in it may be unrealistic, and the meetings that have taken place so far have been rather disappointing for the most part, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro last June has given us reason for greater optimism. Indeed, while far from perfect, it worked for the taking into account, in the long term, of all the concerns and perspectives of the world. It is not an exaggeration to say that after Rio nothing is the same as before in approaching environmental problems and their interrelationship with development. What is even better, the change that has taken place thanks to a real awareness of the globalization of mankind's problems could be the dawn of the new world order. The forthcoming convening of certain international conferences gives us the opporunity to confirm and amplify on that change.

I believe that the World Conference on Human Rights planned for 1993 and the International Conference on Population and Development to take place in 1994 reflect our common willingness to deal with questions that no longer know any borders. The same is true of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit on Social Development, both planned for 1995.

(President Diouf)

Is it not significant that those meetings were programmed after the Rio Summit on Environment and Development, as well as the World Summit for Children? In any case, we must hope that, like their two predecessors, these other conferences will not lose sight of the need to ensure the follow-up on decisions and recommendations that would make their work fruitful.

In this regard it is a pleasure for me to announce on this day, which coincides with the second anniversary of the World Summit for Children, that, in the spirit of that historic meeting, an international conference on assisting African children, organized by the Organization of African Unity with the support of UNICEF, will take place in Dakar from 25 to 27 November 1992. Our goal is to bring the international community to a point where it thinks about the special situation of African children and the difficulties facing the African countries with regard to ensuring their harmonious development, or indeed their mere survival. This situation and these problems will also be focused on in meetings to be held soon devoted to children in French-speaking countries and also within the framework of the OIC.

While reflecting a real awareness of the interdependence of the world, at which we rejoice, the programme of international meetings I have just mentioned shows that much remains to be done in this vast field through joint efforts. In particular I have in mind disarmament for the benefit of development, the easing of the foreign debt burden of the developing countries, the removal of protectionist tariff barriers, the improvement of commodity prices, and the transfer of the technology and human resources necessary for development. No one denies that today our collective survival largely depends upon adequate consideration of these questions and the challenges of the environment, AIDS and drugs - not to mention the problem of peace-keeping operations.

(President Diouf)

Hence, it is urgent to achieve greater solidarity, to which I referred earlier. Moreover, there is a central role that the United Nations must play in dealing with these problems. There is no need to emphasize that such a role requires that this universal Organization review its methods of work and that Member States reassess the means made available to the United Nations.

In Africa and within the Islamic Ummah we recognize the importance of the restructuring and other work to restore dynamism to our Organization being carried out by the Secretary-General and by such organs as the Economic and Social Council, which is intended to cope with the new burdens arising from world developments. On their behalf, I welcome the results already achieved in this regard, and I encourage a continuation of those efforts until they are successful and the goals are reached. I particularly hope that this new trend will duly take account of what are in our view two essential ideas - on the one hand, peace and security are precarious without the eradication of poverty and misery and without a reduction of the gap separating the North and the South; on the other hand, efforts towards effectiveness should not sacrifice the democratic spirit by which the universality of the United Nations is maintained.

Moreover, the Tenth Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was just held successfully in Jakarta, bore the stamp of renewal in continuity and achieved considerable progress in reinforcing that trend.

Given the scores of challenges and the ever stronger commitment of the non-governmental organizations working alongside Governments to meet those challenges, I would add the need to take into account the recommendations of those organizations. I am thinking even that we could study the possibility,

(President Diouf)

through the efforts of the Secretary-General, of requiring such recommendations to be taken into account in specific fields.

I have had the signal honour to address you on behalf of various peoples some of which are separated by thousands of kilometres. But these peoples share with my country - Senegal - the same faith in human solidarity, the same hope for a better tomorrow, even the same goals. United in their diversity, these peoples are calling for justice where it is trampled and peace wherever it is threatened. They are calling for the coming of a world in which hunger, intolerance and unfairness have disappeared. These peoples call upon you to act together, to innovate and to do so without delay.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Senegal for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. AL-THANI (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset, I would like to express to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations as you assume this high post. Your election is an expression of the confidence you enjoy. It also emphasizes the role your country, Bulgaria, plays at the regional and world levels and reflects the relations of friendship and cooperation it has maintained with other countries of the world.

I would like, in this connection, to commend your predecessor in the presidency of the General Assembly, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, who conducted the work of the previous session of the Assembly with high efficiency.

(Mr. Al-Thani, Qatar)

Our current session, the first to be held since our present Secretary-General, Ambassador Boutros Boutros-Ghali, assumed his high office, is convened at the threshold of a new era of profound change with which the world Organization must come to grips in a manner that would enhance its effectiveness and credibility, now that the old bipolarity has disappeared and the burdens faced by the United Nations in every field have increased. There is a great deal of hope set by the peoples of the world on our Organization.

In this context, I would like to pay tribute to the former Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose term ended with the conclusion of our last session.

In this hall 179 delegations are meeting. Our Organization started with 51 Member States in 1945. This increase in membership reflects the success of the United Nations in eliminating colonialism, and upholding the right of peoples to self-determination and independence. By so doing, the United Nations has achieved the aim of universal membership. This is an achievement we should be proud of and we look forward to seeing it become a launching pad from which the Organization would proceed to translate the noble principles and objectives of the Charter from the realm of ideas to the world of reality.

The State of Qatar shares with all Member States the desire of reactivating and developing the United Nations in a manner that would be compatible with the new world situation and which would strengthen the Organization's role in maintaining peace and stability in the world.

(Mr. Al-Thani, Qatar)

We believe that that desired stability will be achieved only through the creation of effective mechanisms for resolving disputes that arise between States either by diplomatic means, such as direct dialogue and mediation, or by recourse to international law as applied by the International Court of Justice.

Despite the end of the cold war and the bipolarity which were among the causes of the arms race, arms limitation continues to be one of the main concerns of the United Nations. It was hoped that the end of the cold war would mean a significant and speedy reduction in the magnitude of that arms race. However, this has not been the case. In 1990, experts estimated that 15 per cent of the aggregate of all Government budgets in the world is still being spent on armaments and military preparedness. This is a much higher percentage than that of expenditure on education or on health care. The burden of military expenditure weighs more heavily on developing countries than on industrialized countries because of the discrepancy between the two groups of countries in the area of disposable resources.

If we look carefully into the new developments in nuclear armaments we find that the situation is much worse. For while we go on wasting the valuable resources which should be used for development and the building of a better future for man, we endanger that very future with nuclear armament. Therefore, the problem of arms control will remain one of the central issues which the Organization will continue to address in the near future just as it used to do in the past.

We in the Gulf region, because of what we went through during the war of liberation of our sister State of Kuwait, have a special interest in prohibiting chemical and other weapons of mass destruction and we attach the greatest of hopes on the success of the Conference on Disarmament in rapidly

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concluding a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and preventing the spread of research and production techniques in this field in accordance with General Assembly resolutions, particularly those adopted in the course of its last session.

In this connection, I should like to point out the necessity of compliance by Israel, and by all other States of the Middle East, with this convention, both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and with the regime of international inspection. This should in adherence to the principles of equality and justice and the need to ensure the security of all States of the region without bias or discrimination. Failure by any State in the region to comply with both agreements, or the accordance of special treatment to any of those States would render the whole endeavour void of seriousness and effectiveness. Therefore, we call upon the international community to ensure compliance therewith by Israel.

The question of Palestine is one of the questions that have been with the United Nations since its inception and still awaits a solution. My country attaches great importance to this question and hopes for rapid progress towards its solution in the framework of the ongoing peace process.

The question of the Palestinian people and the denial by Israel of the inalienable rights of that people is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and once the solution of the question of Palestine has been achieved in a manner that would be acceptable to the Palestinians, we will also accept it. If Israel wants to live in peace it should withdraw, not only from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but also from all the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan and southern Lebanon, in accordance with the United

(Mr. Al-Thani, Qatar)

Nations Charter and relevant resolutions which stipulate the inadmissibility of the acquisition or annexation of territories by force, and that it is illegal to occupy the territories of others by military force.

The State of Qatar welcomes the resumption of negotiation between the concerned parties in Washington and reaffirms its commitment to support the peace effort and expresses its hope that a lasting, equitable and comprehensive solution will be reached to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The delegation of my country wishes to voice in this world forum its deep concern over the continued suffering of the brotherly people of Somalia and we appeal to all Somali factions to put an end to the bloodshed, set aside their differences and put the national interest first. My country commends the increasing efforts made by the United Nations at present to alleviate the suffering of that people in a bid to move towards restoring stability to that afflicted country.

As for the situation in the Gulf, my country reaffirms its commitment to the joint political position of its sister countries, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with a view to preserving security and peace in the region, which in turn would contribute to achieving the desired peace in the world.

With regard to the island of Abu Mousa, it is regrettable indeed that at this historic stage through which our region is passing such a dispute should arise between the two neighbours, the State of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Out of our deep concern for the safety and stability of the region, we believe that this dispute should be resolved by peaceful means, through dialogue or by recourse to the law.

(Mr. Al-Thani, Qatar)

The disintegration of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has led to serious consequences that have shaken the conscience of humanity. My country is especially concerned over the acts of aggression committed against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and characterized by extreme violence, particularly against the Muslim population of that Republic, with the aim of driving the Muslims out of their homes and country under the slogan of "ethnic cleansing".

It is the duty of the international community to stand up to this aggression so that the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is a Member State of the United Nations, may preserve its right to freedom and independence.

In his statement made in December 1991 after his election as Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali cited the indebtedness of developing countries as one of the more complicated problems which face the world economy and which all States must address effectively and decisively. The former Secretary-General, also, had often drawn attention to this problem, the existence and gravity of which is not hidden from experts and from the States that suffer from its worsening burden which weighs heavily on the developing countries and often makes them unable to meet their economic obligations, with dire social consequences.

It is self-evident that meeting the burden of foreign debt in every debtor country would be at the expense of its social programmes and its efforts to raise the standard of living of its people and thus those poor countries become even poorer. The problem of foreign debt must be dealt with decisively.

The United Nations has shown its great concern over the problems of the environment by convening the Rio de Janeiro Conference in mid-1992. Even if

(Mr. Al-Thani, Qatar)

that Conference did not rise fully to the level of the hopes set on it, it marked, nevertheless, a positive beginning that could serve as a point of departure for more effective efforts to protect the environment without unnecessary shackles that may impede economic development in developing countries in the name of the protection of the environment which no one disputes.

The peoples of the world look forward to the formulation of a new world order which would ensure world peace and rest on the foundations of international law, the principles of justice and equality and of cooperation and brotherhood. That new world order should not inherit the negative attributes of the old order that led to the creation of blocs, conflicts and polarization with all the attendant evils of underdevelopment, poverty, backwardness, hunger, ignorance and disease. The concept of the new world order should be wide enough to embrace international cooperation and unshackled trade and should address the problems of economic development, side by side with the issues of disarmament, indebtedness, environmental protection and social problems.

If the new world order is to govern the political, economic and social international relations between States, all States must share, on an equal footing, in its formulation so that it may become an equitable world order that truly represents the joint will of the international community and thus enable the human race to build a safe and happy world, for the present and future generations.*

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* Mr. Moumin (Comoros), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. SAHLOUL (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate Mr. Ganev, on behalf of my delegation, on his election to the presidency of this important session of the General Assembly, and to extend to his predecessor, through him, our thanks and appreciation for the skilful manner in which he conducted the work of the previous session. From this rostrum, I also extend our sincere congratulations to the States that have joined the membership of this Organization since the previous session. We welcome them as a new driving force that contributes to the various efforts deployed in the international arena with a view to bringing about prosperity, development, and stability for the peoples and communities of the world.

This session, we have before us an important agenda at all political, economic, social, humanitarian, and security levels. All of us must be aware that, today, the world faces a new set of international phenomena that were not active before the Gulf war and its consequences whose impact is being increasingly felt on the international arena from one day to the next.

For our part, we recognize that new and different international circumstances emerge with the dawn of every day. The barrier of the ideologies which, in the past, immersed the world in conflict, confrontation and competition for the sake of narrow interests, has collapsed. The improvement in East-West relations has opened up new vistas. However, the period of transition we are living through has spawned new contradictory tendencies, the most conspicuous of which is an intense acerbity in the relations of the wealthy North and the poor South under the circumstances of the so-called new world order. On the other hand, unipolarity has led the world into a new security system controlled by a handful of major Powers in the complete absence of active participation on the part of the rest of the international community.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

The era of international détente we hear so much about nowadays, is no more, in our view, than détente between those major Powers with their economic and military muscle. That détente has yet to address the closing of the wide gap between North and South, it has yet to reform international economic and commercial relations and it has yet to address the issues of overriding concern to the South, such as the debt burden, poverty, illiteracy and disease. On top of all that, the States of the developing world are being subjected now to the practices of the so-called new international legality which means, inter alia, interference and intervention in the internal affairs of those States and pursuance of the policies of diktat which deprive them of the right of making their own decisions.

In the tenth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which concluded its meetings in Jakarta a few weeks ago, the Presidents and Heads of Government of the Movement deliberated over the current international situation and the role of the Movement therein. They have voiced their conviction that the Non-Aligned Movement, being the representative of the largest grouping of States and peoples in the world, has a role to play in the context of the unipolarity that reigns in the world today and, therefore, should be included in a flexible mechanism that would aim at a new world balance in which the developing countries of the world should have an effective role in the formulation and setting up of a new world order that must replace the rampant international chaos of today, and put an end to the present marginalization of international covenants and agreements which must be binding to us all. The Presidents and Heads of Government of the Non-Aligned Movement have set for themselves anew the target of ensuring a full presence for the Movement in addressing all the international issues on the world's agenda. They also have

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set the target of becoming genuine partners in all decisions to be taken particularly within the framework of the United Nations and its Security Council.

The international mechanism governing relations between States should, in our opinion, continue to be the United Nations and its agencies. However, in order for this important Organization fully to discharge its duties, the following must be achieved.

Full commitment and adherence to the United Nations Charter, which must be developed in a manner that would be compatible with the changes that have taken place in the world since it was signed.

The General Assembly must be enabled to play a full role in the maintenance of peace and security. The General Assembly's role should be as important as that of the Security Council's.

Selectivity and double standards must be abandoned with respect to the implementation of the Charter's provisions.

The Security Council's activities should be characterized by transparency. The Council should adopt a democratic approach in the area of decision-making.

The United Nations Secretary-General should be able to play his role fully, without diktat from certain States, and should deal with all States on an equal footing. While appreciating the responsibilities of the Secretary-General, we are of the opinion that he should have the time to meet the delegates and representatives of Member States and listen to what they have to say on issues of importance to their countries and their regions.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

The permanent membership of the Security Council and the right of veto which is the prerogative of the few should be reviewed. It is worh mentioning in this respect that the veto has been cast 279 times since the inception of the Security Council, in relation to issues most of which were of special importance to countries of the developing world.

The new world order being heralded nowadays should not violate the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or independence of States nor deprive them of their right to make their own decisions. Preventive diplomacy relating to the making and maintenance of peace should proceed from a basic principle aimed, first and foremost, at the complete eradication of regional and international tension, and at seeking out and uprooting the root causes of political, social and economic conflicts so that the countries involved may live in peace and enjoy stability and prosperity.

The type of preventive diplomacy that is accompanied by the use of military force must not be used against the smaller States alone. It is worth wondering here how military force can be used against countries which possess large or medium military capabilities. This is a legitimate question and we, the smaller States, should look for an answer to it that would meet our urgent concerns. If preventive diplomacy is to proceed initially from the principle of fact-finding, such fact-finding should be based on information-gathering from original sources and should avoid selectivity and hasty conclusions that could become the justification for specific actions which may well be military in nature. We in the developing world have suffered a great deal from the unfair communication of facts on issues concerning our countries, either

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

through mass media networks or governmental and non-governmental organizations which may be active in our countries. We hope that the United Nations and its various agencies, in all cases, will act impartially and not fall prey to narrow political opportunism.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

In the midst of international changes, we in the Sudan are striving to spread the principles of Shura - meaning consultation and participation in decision-making - and democracy, and to find a peaceful and lasting political solution to the problem of the southern Sudan. We have so far achieved considerable progress, at the Abuja talks, which took place in May this year under the auspices of President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria.

We look forward with optimism and hope to the forthcoming second round of the Abuja talks, which will soon take place. We expect to reach, with the rebel movement, a final solution to the problem of the south, by the end of this year. It is our sincere hope that the peace efforts by the Sudan Government will attract the support and blessings of all friendly and fraternal States and of the international community as a whole.

Allow me to mention here specifically, an important issue that weighs a lot on many minds these days, namely the issue of human rights. The protection and maintenance of human rights is a sacred obligation that all religions and human laws call for. The causes of instability and problems of security and peace are directly and organically linked to the maintenance of these rights, for individuals and for peoples alike. Therefore, it is our conviction that human rights are linked to the right of individuals and peoples to dignity, physical and mental health, the freedom to make their own decisions without diktat, the right to have access to the fruits of scientific advancement, namely progress and technology, the right to be free from poverty, disease and hunger and the right to education as well as to material and psychological stability.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

However, we notice that the principles of human rights, just like many other ideals, are being exploited and misused as a pretext for interference and intervention in the internal affairs of smaller States. Regardless of the claims of interference and intervention for the protection of minorities, such behaviour is, in essence, no more than using the issue of human rights as a weapon against those countries which do not submit to foreign diktat, and as a means of shrugging off moral obligations towards the developing countries.

We also notice that while the lofty ideal of human rights is being wielded as weapon, its use is characterized by a double-standard. The crimes and violations by allies are ignored, while accusations of human rights violations are trumped up against those countries that do not surrender their right to independent decision-making.

We notice too that certain countries have set themselves up as the self-styled protectors of human rights even though they lack any moral grounds that may qualify them for such a role. Such States give themselves the right to dictate norms of human rights according to their own cultures, customs and social conceptions, and pass judgement on others accordingly.

The promotion of human rights and basic freedoms will be properly achieved, as envisaged by those who wrote the United Nations Charter, only through international cooperation and not through confrontation or coercion. The upholding and implementation of those rights within national frameworks remain within the jurisdiction and responsibility of each Government individually so long as that Government properly performs its duties towards its citizens. It is the right of all peoples to freely establish their own political and economic systems and institutions on the basis of respect for the principles of national sovereignty, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

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In this context, reference should be made to the fact that the fundamental principles of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights embody two components that balance out each other: the first relates to the rights and basic freedoms of the individual, while the second stipulates duties of the individual towards society and State.

This balance between rights and duties is important, inasmuch as its absence leads to the negation of the rights of society as a whole and to instability, especially in developing countries. We agree also with the view that the political, civil, economic, social and cultural dimensions of human rights are indivisible, and cannot be selectively denied for contingent political motives.

At the same time, we reject every attempt to use the human rights issue as a precondition for the provision of economic and social assistance as this leads to the marginalization of such rights on the economic, social and cultural levels. We emphasize that development and human rights are concomitant and interdependent. Hence the need for cooperation and multilateral assistance in the implementation of social and economic development programmes in the developing countries on the basis of the fact that the right to development is a valid, legitimate right that constitutes an indivisible part of fundamental human rights. We hope that the World Conference on Human Rights that will be held next year will deal comprehensively with the issue in all its aspects.

Another important issue that requires urgent attention is the situation in Somalia. The people of this sister country are victims of a bitter civil war.

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They have suffered its ravages. Since the convening of the minisummit of the States of the Horn of Africa on humanitarian issues, those States have performed and continue to perform their duty in searching for a peaceful solution to the differences between the warring factions in the dispute in Somalia.

We look forward to the support of the international community for that role in order for it to achieve the goals spelled out at the Bahr Dar meeting. We had expected the international community to recognize that role and develop it, as stability in the region is important, especially to its countries and for the welfare of its peoples which cannot be ensured without this desired stability.

However, what happened instead was that a decision to send international forces to Somalia was taken, and the numbers of those forces have started to increase from one day to the next. It was our opinion that such forces should have been composed of contingents from the countries of the region itself, because we are worried that some countries from outside the region may pursue their own interests there by supporting one faction or another against the others and thereby enabling it to win the war. Stability in Somalia cannot be achieved without comprehensive national reconciliation; one faction cannot have sole power, and we hope that the faction of Mr. Ali Mahdi will come to realize this fact.

Several tragic multifaceted situations continue to beset the world such as the refugee problems and the plight of displaced and homeless persons. These problems are clearly manifest in Africa and the Middle East.

The Palestinian people continue to struggle and strive for the establishment of their own independent State on their own soil at a time when bilateral and multilateral negotiations are being obstructed by procedural

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hurdles that have held back those talks and prevented the negotiators from addressing the substance of the conflict. The new Israeli Government has not yet proved its serious intent or demonstrated the political will to restore the rights of the Palestinian people and consequently restore peace and security to this sensitive region of the world. We consider that the convening of an international conference on the Palestinian question under full United Nations supervision is the only viable alternative.

We further believe that the attempts being made with the aim of fragmenting the territorial integrity of Iraq are negative acts and examples of the unjust improper application of international norms. Moreover, those attempts will eventually jeopardize the balance of power in the region, ensure absolute Israeli hegemony and open wide the doors to Israel's belligerent and expansionist intentions which aim at ingathering all the Jews of the world in a greater Israel.

Another human tragedy that needs close attention is the question of the Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are being subjected to genocide and liquidation under the very noses of those who call for the preservation of human rights and the protection of minorities. This situation, in our view, is the result of ancient and anachronistic ethnic and religious hatreds which should have disappeared by now. All countries agree that the massacres, genocide, detentions and summary executions that are taking place there have no precedent other than what took place in the days of the Second World War.

While the changes that swept over the countries of Eastern Europe have resulted in the emergence of new republics, we would have hoped that, in due course, those republics were going to join the world community of independent States and ensure the enjoyment to the full, by all their peoples, of religious and cultural freedoms.

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The appeasement of a belligerent majority is a clear case of bias in favour of the creed and cultural affiliations of that majority as opposed to the Islamic faith of a considerable number of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The actual handling of this issue has been flawed by the selectivity of the major Powers, especially the five permanent members of the Security Council. It is definitely short-sighted to deal with the problem only from a limited humanitarian perspective. What the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina need above all is the preservation of their identity side by side with freedom and protection from acts of displacement and extermination. We therefore consider that the resolutions of the Security Council on this issue are inadequate because they do not address the issue in its wider political and ethical context. Proceeding from this view, the Islamic Group has condemned Security Council resolution 770 (1992).

In our opinion, complete military intervention by the United Nations is the only viable solution. If this does not take place, our nagging doubts that there is a scheme to erase the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the map of Europe will only grow. In addition, the policy of depriving the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the means to defend their very existence while the Serbian aggressors continue to receive arms without any interference from the United Nations, will cast strong doubts on the integrity and neutrality of the international Organization.

Recently, a minor crisis has flared up between the two sisterly States of Iran and the United Arab Emirates over certain disputed islands. We are disturbed by the fact that that dispute has been transferred from the bilateral context to regional and international forums. This will only exacerbate the conflict. The parties that are now engaged in promoting the

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escalation of that dispute especially in the mass media, are trying, in fact, to aggravate tensions in the Gulf region, which has suffered the unfortunate effects of the sad events that have swept over it during the past few years. We urge most strongly the containment of this dispute which should be addressed at the bilateral level in line with the operation of the old mechanism that was agreed upon in 1971 between the two parties.

The Persian Gulf area has suffered a series of wars that have obstructed its development. The present agonies of the people of Iraq under the conditions of an unjust economic blockade and the unending attempts to fragment their country's territorial integrity have resulted from disputes which, in our view, should have been settled by peaceful means within the regional framework, in order to prevent foreign interests from infiltrating the region and capitalizing on differences and disputes to serve their own strategic and economic designs.

The international economic situation remains static. Indeed, its principal feature continues to be the unending deterioration of the economies of the countries of the South and the widening gap between those countries and the industrial countries. The major cause of that deterioration lies in the negative and dangerous effects on international trade of the drop in exports of the developing countries as a result of the deterioration of prices of their primary commodity exports to the industrial countries.

The horrendous negative effects of the debt crisis have been aggravated to the point where they not only threaten the prospects of economic and social development of the developing countries but also the very existence of those countries.

It is important at this point to mention the failure of the industrial countries to honour their commitments, as embodied in international treaties

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and strategies pertaining to the flow of development assistance to the developing countries, and particularly in implementing the resolutions embodied in the the international strategy for the decade of the 1980s, which called for allocating 0.7% of their gross national income to official assistance to the developing countries. Instead of implementing those resolutions, the developed countries have blocked every attempt to adopt a new strategy for the decade of the 1990s. Furthermore, the industrial countries have failed to implement the programme for the 1990s, which was adopted in favour of the least developed countries in the 1990 Paris Conference. This failure has caused a grave setback to the economic and social development of the least developed countries.

Africa, with its feeble infrastructures, is the continent that has been most affected by that imbalance in the world economic situation. It is the continent that suffers most, because of the considerably diminished flow of economic assistance and investment and the imposition on its countries of unjust conditions that are not imposed upon the other groupings of the developing world. Moreover, the attempts to destabilize some regions of the continent aim, in our view, at creating a geopolitical climate that would be compatible with the strategies of certain major Powers. We all know the potentials of Africa, a continent with a great wealth of untapped human and natural resources.

The real challenge that now faces the international community is narrowing of the ever-widening gap between the wealthy countries of the North and the poor countries of the South. It is that gap which is the real threat to world peace and security. The debt crisis is one of the products of the present international economic order. It is a phenomenon that resulted,

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essentially, from the structural imbalance of that order, and its failure to generate an appropriate developmental climate.

We have an unshakable belief in the necessary collective interdependency and the organic interrelatedness of the international economic order, if it is to be an order whose aim is to mutually benefit all mankind. This cannot be the case, however, unless comprehensive and integrated solutions are found to the existing problems on the basis of equality, justice and interdependency. The dialogue required for the achievement of that objective cannot take place without the political will, courage, wisdom and far-sightedness of all concerned.

In conclusion, we should like to express our absolute conviction regarding the necessity of collective action in the current period of détente in international relations. That means, in our view, developing the activities of all the organs of the United Nations and giving those organs the required importance. In order to reach that objective, we need to cooperate and work together, hand in hand.

May Allah lead us to our noble objectives and grant us the vision to see them clearly.

ADDRESS BY MR. ADRIEN SIBOMANA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Adrien Sibomana, Prime Minister of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Mr. Adrien Sibomana, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. SIBOMANA (Burundi) (interpretation from French): For me it is a great pleasure and an agreeable duty to participate in the work of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. For almost half a century the United Nations has been working to lead mankind to the more human condition of peace and international solidarity.

Allow me to take this early opportunity to discharge the duty - an honour given to me by Major Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi - of conveying to Mr. Ganev, the President of the General Assembly at its current session, a message of peace and solidarity, in keeping with the fundamental purposes set out in the Charter. Allow me also, on behalf of my delegation, my Government and the people of Burundi, to join other representatives in congratulating Mr. Ganev on his election to the presidency. There is no doubt that his distinguished qualities, together with his rich experience, will lead to the success that everyone expects of our deliberations.

Our congratulations go also to the members of the General Committee, who, I am sure, will spare no effort to support the President in the discharge of his responsibilities.

At the same time I express our very good wishes to Mr. Ganev's eminent predecessor as President, who conducted the work of the General Assembly at its forth-sixth session with remarkable competence.

Furthermore, I should like to pay a very well deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his determination to see that peace and security in the world are preserved.

The Republic of Burundi warmly welcomes the countries that have just joined the family of the United Nations.

Mankind is going through a period of contrasts. Current events are characteristic of the transition from one era to another. Indeed, the world

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gives the impression that it is seeking a new balance, which, we hope, will enable men and women to live together more harmoniously. Whereas the ending of the cold war and the remarkable disarmament efforts have resulted in significant progress in the field of international security, bloody conflicts continue to tear the planet apart.

While a series of events, of which everyone is aware, is persuading peoples to work together to achieve economic and even political integration, nations are being torn apart by very bloody fratricidal conflicts. One has only to consider the extremely worrying situation in Somalia to realize that the world is still a theatre for tragedies that one cannot bear to watch.

In recent years the winds of liberty have been blowing throughout the world, and all nations have been rising up in a crusade for human rights and the dignity of the human person, yet men and women continue to be deprived of elementary rights - the right to life, the right to a homeland and the right to development. This is the case in South Africa, where apartheid, even in its death throes, continues to claim victims, and where people, here and there, continue to be deprived of a homeland.

While steady scientific progress is enabling mankind to master natural forces and is preparing him to subdue other planets, men and women continue to wallow in deprivation. This is especially true of the African continent, where ignorance, hunger and sickness still reign on a grand scale. The picture so eloquently presented by Abdou Diouf in his capacity as President of the Organization of African Unity fully conveys the concerns of Africa and of Africans, and we agree completely with what he said.

At the Rio Conference the international community took a major step in its awareness of the need to preserve the quality of the environment on Earth, which is our common home. Paradoxically, however, as we seek means of

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subsistence we continue to destroy things that we need to enable us to live and breathe. This becomes more and more evident when we look at the intimate relationship between the environment and development - a relationship that the Rio Conference very rightly set out for us.

We are living in an era of paradox. On one hand, it seems that the world has been moving ahead at full speed in terms of peace and security, freedom, well-being and progress, but, on the other hand, we are witnessing war, poverty, hunger and misery. In these conditions mankind has no chance of making progress. Thus the objectives set out in the Charter of the United Nations are still relevant.

In this the last decade of the twentieth century we must show that we are determined to preserve international peace and security. We must also demonstrate greater solidarity, as an injury to the little finger causes suffering to the entire body. Like the illustrious founders of this Organization, we must proclaim our faith in a better world and must turn the United Nations into an Organization capable of maintaining international peace and security and of ensuring justice and respect for human rights.

Moreover, the Organization must be able, in accordance with its Charter, to promote social progress and better standards of life for all peoples of the world. The Republic of Burundi therefore pays a tribute to all those who are striving daily to maintain peace in the world and welcomes the signs of solidarity whereby all peoples may be enabled to live life to the full, in keeping with the aspirations and values that underlie the United Nations.

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In that connection, the report "An Agenda for Peace" submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General deserves the international community's close attention. For its part, the Republic of Burundi reiterates its faith in the United Nations Charter and its commitment to work with the international community in achieving the triumph of its ideals.

The rostrum of the United Nations, which is provided to us each year, is a special place for dialogue and exchanges of views that enable us better to understand one another and share our experiences. Allow me, therefore, briefly to share with representatives the principal paths that my country has decided to take in rebuilding and making its modest contribution to the realization of the Organization's goals.

In the not-too-distant past my country went through some tragic experiences caused by continuing divisive conflicts, essentially ethnic. They were followed by tragedies that resulted in loss of human life and a large exodus of refugees seeking asylum in neighbouring countries and elsewhere in the world. That situation had a serious effect on social relations. Rancour, mistrust and hatred took root in the hearts of brothers and sisters who should have been living together in a single, age-old nation.

It was in this context - an uneasy one, to say the least - that on 3 September 1987 the people of Burundi rose up to change the unhappy course of their history. Five years later, I am pleased to announce that Burundi is once again a united nation. Indeed, with the proclamation of the Third Republic, Burundi has turned the page and is now embarked upon the construction of a new society of peace, justice and social harmony. Under the dynamic and farsighted leadership of Major Pierre Buyoya, President of the

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Republic, the people of Burundi are in the process of burying once and for all the quarrels and divisions from which they have suffered for so long. To achieve that goal, the Government has based its actions on three fundamental factors: national reconciliation, democratization and development.

First, the people of Burundi set out to realize internal reconciliation. To remove the divisions that had rent the fabric of Burundi society, the people determined, with a supreme effort, to pull themselves together and experience the forgiveness of national reconciliation. Witness to this is the proclamation of faith contained in the Charter of National Unity, in which Burundis, with historic conviction, stated:

"We are determined to break with the past and to embark upon a new era in order to build a more promising future free of hatred and mistrust."

The national reconciliation now achieved has been the result of a complete process. The first requirement was to engage in an examination of conscience, which inspired Burundis to join together and to tell themselves the truth. That process began with the establishment of a National Commission made up of citizens of all ethnic groups, all regions and all religious and socio-professional sectors. The Commission's task was to diagnose the disease of division and then to propose appropriate cures. After seven months of arduous work the Commission submitted a report setting forth an analysis of the situation and proposals for a better future.

However, as President Buyoya has so pertinently said, the construction and deepening of a people's unity cannot be accomplished by the President of the Republic alone, nor by his Government. Therefore, based on the Commission's report, a national debate on the important question of national unity was organized among all sectors of society.

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In making such a thorough examination of a subject so long taboo, the people of Burundi has discovered the virtues of dialogue and joint effort, elevated into a form of government. The national debate was crowned with the creation of the Charter of National Unity, which was adopted with the support of more than 89 per cent of the population in a referendum held on 5 February 1991.

Since that time the Charter of National Unity has become the pre-eminent point of reference for all of the nation's political life and a pact by which all Burundis have sealed an alliance to consolidate their regained unity.

With the Charter we, the people of Burundi have proclaimed our faith in lasting national unity and condemned and forever rejected all divisions of any kind. We have thus committed ourselves to uprooting from our society any tendency to violence, physical extermination and vengeance.

More positively, we have committed ourselves to rigorous respect for the ethic of national unity. This is translated into respect for human life, the promotion of justice and the safeguarding and consolidation of peace and security.

In parallel with that process, which was aimed principally at reconciling hearts and minds, the process of consolidating national unity has been marked by a series of specific measures undertaken with a concern to administer the State in keeping with the ethic of national unity.

In October 1988 the President of the Republic established a new Government called the Government of National Unity, whose composition reflects the concern of high-level State authorities to bring all elements of society into the management of public affairs. The Government has the political mission of stimulating a new spirit in all sectors of national life. At every

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level of society responsibilities have been entrusted to citizens from all walks of life, without any discrimination whatsoever. In this undertaking the Government has given pride of place to other values cherished by the Third Republic: equality of all citizens, the cult of excellence and total transparency in the management of public affairs.

With national unity regained and national reconciliation an accomplished fact, we are able give all due attention to grappling with the thorny problem of refugees. Everyone agrees that the fact that there are so many millions of refugees throughout the world is a result of internal or inter-State conflicts that Governments have been powerless to resolve. Furthermore, the international community owes a big debt to the refugees, inasmuch as its inability to manage harmoniously has led to the violation of a basic human right, the inalienable right to live somewhere in one's homeland, with no risk of having no home.

Fortified by those convictions, and having laid the foundations for domestic peace, the Government of the Republic of Burundi has undertaken a vast programme of voluntary repatriation for Burundi refugees. It feels that voluntary repatriation is by far the best lasting solution to the refugee question. Thus, in carrying out this work of national reconciliation our country's highest bodies have offered those of our compatriots who have gone into exile the opportunity to return freely to their country. In so doing, our ambition is to see that soon no Burundians will be living with the degrading label of refugee.

(Mr. Sibomana, Burundi)

From this rostrum and before the entire international community, I should like to repeat what Major Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic, said, and solemnly reiterate my Government's appeal to all refugees from Burundi, wherever they may be, to freely return to their homeland. We shall welcome them with open arms.

I am pleased to note at this point that the results already achieved in this programme are extremely encouraging.

In 1988, following the unrest that disrupted peace and security in two of our communities, we succeeded in repatriating approximately 50,000 people who had moved to neighbouring countries. Thanks to the assistance of the international community, we were able without difficulty to set them up again on their own land, to build new homes for them and to help reintegrate them into our production networks.

In that same spirit, my Government is continuing to welcome those of the refugees who left their country some 20 years ago that freely choose to return.

Even as we speak, more than 25,000 of them have already returned home, and others continue to arrive.

Thanks to national and international solidarity, those who were repatriated have rejoined society in complete dignity. The Government has made an inventory of all available lands that could accommodate them, and they are being given assistance that allows them to meet their needs until they can subsist on the fruits of their own labour. In collaboration with local administrative authorities, they are receiving all the help necessary to build a decent home, and they even have health insurance so that they can easily obtain health care. Their children have been integrated into the school system, and those among the repatriated who have some training are receiving all the help needed to secure a position in the work force.

(Mr. Sibomana, Burundi)

I take this opportunity to thank the countries and the organizations that have supported us in carrying out this programme, and we also appeal to the international community to continue to help us in this process, of which my people are so proud.

In sealing this pact of national unity, the people of Burundi placed special emphasis on the absolute need to see to it that the management of the State is democratically assured. That is why, in keeping with the consolidation of national unity, Burundi has undertaken to democratize our institutions.

I would be remiss not to share with the Assembly information about the steps that my country has taken. This was for us an original move, and we have every reason to be satisfied with it. Indeed, in this process as well as in the one that led to national reconciliation, the Government has always been careful to involve all segments of the population. Through frank and sincere dialogue with the people, the political class has always been honest and wise enough to put itself in the hands of the people, being convinced that no work can last unless the citizens are involved, for in the final analysis they are the ones who do the work and who benefit from all changes.

Thus, throughout all of last year the people were closely involved with drawing up a new constitution, which was subsequently adopted by referendum on 9 March 1992 by more than 90 per cent of the population. The new constitution establishes a multiparty system and gives special attention to respect for fundamental human rights.

In this way, Burundi has put an end to 26 years of a single-party system and has restored order, serenity and national harmony. Since that time, the Government has worked to implement the guidelines contained in the constitution.

(Mr. Sibomana, Burundi)

The process of effectively implementing pluralism was accelerated in such a way that today, seven political parties are already on the political scene. Appropriate legislation was also passed promptly to promote the right to free association and freedom of the press, which are indispensable foundations for a vital multiparty system.

In terms of human rights, independent leagues have been established. In this particular area, which is very dear to us, we have just established a centre for the promotion of human rights whose mission is to instil into society, through teaching and various means of communication, the values that underlie respect for human dignity.

In Burundi, the democratization of our institutions is therefore proceeding in this manner, and the Government is strongly determined to keep moving forward. That is why, in keeping with the guidelines that the President has already laid down, the Government is planning to hold general elections in the early months of 1993. Once the constitution has clearly defined the institutional structure that is to guide the country and the competing partners, that is, the political parties, are on the scene, we believe that it would be a reprehensible step backwards to prolong this period of transition indefinitely.

Our intention is to give to a sovereign people the opportunity to speak, so that they can democratically elect the leaders of their choice. We do so in what we term the Burundi way, that is to say in complete openness, through dialogue and joint efforts.

I should not like to take advantage of your kind attention, Sir. None the less, I should be remiss if, before ending my statement, I did not mention what we consider to be a pillar of unity and democracy - that is, development.

(Mr. Sibomana, Burundi)

I should not like to take advantage of your kind attention, Sir. None the less, I should be remiss if, before ending my statement, I did not mention what we consider to be a pillar of unity and democracy - that is, development. Speaking of national unity, we say that unity and development are inseparable realities and that it would be difficult to achieve one without the other. The same is true of democracy. Indeed, without enjoying the public freedoms that are the structure of true democracy, people cannot fully express their creativity. Similarly, democratic freedoms that are not based on the satisfaction of elementary human needs would only be wishful thinking and would rapidly become void of any substance.

Following these principles, the Government has undertaken a series of programmes of action for development. For a country such as ours, development is not a difficult concept to define. Essentially, it boils down to satisfying the basic needs of the population, such as drinking water, health services, schooling for their children, decent homes and also food security. To succeed in this development enterprise, the authorities of the third Republic initiated a structural adjustment programme with the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Implementation of the programme is intended to stabilize the finances of our country and to transform our productive structures with a view to achieving economic growth. This reform, moreover, is guided by the principles of good management of public affairs and of liberalizing the economy.

In so doing, important efforts have been made to promote the private sector. This new manner of conducting development emphasizes the growing disengagement of the State and the giving of responsibility to individuals and corporations. In this framework, the Government has, since 1991, embarked

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on a major economic programme to privatize public enterprises. What is involved is the partial or total opening up of public enterprises to private capital. It also involves restructuring those enterprises that need it in order to be more profitable and to establish more effective mechanisms for managing them.

(Mr. Sibomana, Burundi)

The liberalization of Burundi's economy has just entered a new stage with the creation of a free trade zone regime. This reform, intended to promote investment in order to bring about the diversification of our exports, grants tax and other advantages which some consider to be among the most advantageous in the world.

Investors who so desire can come and work with us. I can guarantee that they will not regret doing so. The political reforms that have taken place within the framework of strengthening national unity and of democratization of institutions have created in our country a political and social environment which is very favourable to business.

I have given a thumbnail sketch of the situation in Burundi today. As I indicated at the beginning of my statement, the Government and people of Burundi are working to achieve national reconciliation. The steps we have taken allow us to welcome our brothers and sister who were refugees and enable them to regain their dignity by returning freely to their homeland. Thanks to the national unity we have regained, the democratization of our institutions is also taking place in an atmosphere of peace, order and serenity. We have committed ourselves to ambitious development programmes in order to establish an environment and a social infrastructure that can support social peace.

In this way, in full cooperation with the international community, Burundi feels that it is on the right path, one which will allow it, moreover, to make its contribution to building a better world of peace, security and international solidarity. This is the best inheritance we could leave to our children.

How could we not in this United Nations body give some thought to the children, who are the future of us all? This is why we wish especially to

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recall that today, 30 September 1992, marks the second anniversary of the World Summit for Children. We express to the Secretary-General our appreciation for the report (A/47/264) he has just submitted to us on the follow-up to the Summit. It deserves our attention.

We should also like to take this opportunity to say that we have high hopes that the forthcoming conference on this subject, which is to take place in Dakar, Senegal, next November will study the issue of the future of Africa's children.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Rwandi for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Adrien Sibomana, Prime Minister of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. OCHOA ANTICH (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of Venezuela, I congratulate our President and the Government and people of Bulgaria on his election to preside over this session of the General Assembly.

I welcome the new Member States, whose presence among us makes this Organization more universal.

I also wish to place on record our gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, who presided over the work of the forty-sixth session with such distinction.

We are meeting at a time of particular instability and uncertainty. The international system is trying to find a new order and basic principles and guidelines to enable us to build a more just and egalitarian world. We are living at a time of rapid historical change. The most dramatic events and the

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most unexpected changes are taking place before a seemingly helpless world leadership.

The end of communism is already a thing of the past; the collapse of the Soviet empire is ancient history. The absolute triumph of the West is beginning to be questioned, given the financial and exchange rate problems which the industrialized countries are experiencing, together with their profound social crisis. We might be talking about a post-capitalist era in which the quest for supposedly free competition has turned into a total dehumanization of the economic model, producing a yawning gap between rich and poor in world society.

We are facing not the end of history, but rather a great lack of leadership, of confidence and of enthusiasm for the future. The industrialized countries, bogged down in their economic rivalries, cannot coordinate their actions in favour of peace, stability and justice. Deprived of the enemy which used to make them act together, they are now experiencing a substantial weakening of the bonds which used to unite them.

The times in which we live require strong, democratic international organizations if the preventive diplomacy the Secretary-General has described in his "Agenda for Peace" - which we are studying very carefully - is to take root. We support the more active role he envisages for the Organization, in the area not of intervention, but rather of prevention. To achieve this, the United Nations and the specialized agencies must cooperate

> "to address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression." (A/47/277, para. 15)

The Security Council, which should have been the most efficient United Nations body, is an anachronism. It still reflects the interrelationship of forces that existed when it was created. When the United Nations came into

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being, its keystone was the Council, controlled by its five permanent members, which was given predominance to try to eliminate the limitations which had made the former League of Nations ineffectual. The founders of the Organization thought that this time the big Powers would be able to exercise effective leadership, in keeping with their power; that is, they would have the ability to act as world monitors and arbitrators and bring order to the world.

To the frustration of humanity, the two super-Powers proved that they alone were enough to lay the foundations of international order. The Security Council, from the day the Organization was established until the end of the cold war, was to play second fiddle in the management of world affairs.

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After the collapse of the Soviet system, the Security Council began to regain its original functions. But it is doing so under the aegis of the triumphant values. Thus the major countries can outline an international scenario in accordance with their interests. This situation should be reconsidered so that, as the Secretary-General has said:

"Democracy within the family of nations means the application of its principles within the world Organization itself." (A/47/277, para. 82)

Before the General Assembly, the President of Venezuela, Carlos Andres Perez, clearly conveyed his concern over the need to make the Security Council more representative. He said:

"Our own people's aspiration to democracy can also become a permanent aspiration of the United Nations. The Organization will not be strengthened unless an agreement is reached to eliminate the right of veto exercised by the permanent members of the Security Council, a right that responded to circumstances and realities that have ceased to exist. This mechanism runs counter to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and limits its effective contributions to collective security.

"The right to veto Security Council resolutions is a mechanism that limits the achievement of consensus among the Member States of the United Nations. The Security Council must be a representative body, and in no way should any of its members negate the majority view of the United Nations. If we want collective and democratic security, we must aspire to universal egalitarian law." (A/46/PV.8, p. 13)

In our changing times, concepts of State sovereignty and integrity are also being re-examined. Paradoxically, the "champions of freedom", once victorious, are trying to impose a homogeneous and intolerant world order in which an independent protagonist would be seen as a destabilizing and

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threatening factor. This is a matter of serious concern to the States of the southern hemisphere. In the past, we were important to the North in two ways: as the natural scenario for the East-West confrontation and as essential suppliers of raw materials.

The confrontation between East and West is gone and with it the political and strategic usefulness of the third world. Raw materials have become marginal in the present world economy. The slump in the demand for commodities becomes more acute with every passing year. The phrase "mobilizing effect" used to mean that any surge in the rich economies would carry the developing economies along with it. When the North was growing, so were exports of raw materials. The situation has completely changed - traditional export commodities no longer have the same value. International markets can almost do without us.

The only way to preserve peace is to find balanced links between the hemispheres, put an end to relations of confrontation and strengthen cooperation between peoples. I have not come here to point out the mistakes made by the North. The countries in the South also bear heavy responsibilities. We must meet our challenge. The era of demagogic populism, inefficiency and corruption is over. If we wish to compete in a world of open markets we must devote ourselves to productive work and reward creativity. Venezuela has realized this and is in a position from which it can look to the future with optimism, provided there is compliance with the rules of open markets and competitiveness between nations.

However, we must emphasize that while large regions in the South, especially in Latin America, are striving to internationalize their economies by opening them up to competition, the North is increasingly locking itself into inward-turning blocs. Ultimately, the free market - one of the triumphant

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values to which I have already referred - would seem to work in a single direction.

If the rigid attitude of some international financial institutions persists, together wth the dangerous protectionism that is again emerging among the industrialized countries, then the 1990s, which in Latin America began with severe economic measures and hopeful signs of growth, may also turn out to be another lost decade.

The North is not making a contribution to the establishment of the necessary economic links between the two hemispheres. The new world order implies a dual concept: on the one hand, the failure of the South and, on the other, the defeat of the communist East. The power logic being applied is simple and direct. There is no longer any question of the loss of any given strategic resource or strategic position falling into the hands of communism. There being no enemies, there is no longer any danger of losing friends; worse yet, there is no longer any need for friends. What is important now is that there be no disorder and no anarchy. What matters now is the willingness of the South to submit to certain global rules of the game as defined by the North in terms of its own interests.

Yet they fail to understand that these rules of the game become inoperative in situations of anarchy and civil strife, which can dismember a State and have spill-over effects on those surrounding it. Somalia is a tragic example of what the southern hemisphere could become, on a larger scale, in the twenty-first century. Some wealthy States may feel that they can live unaffected by such realities. They are mistaken. We must not forget that the South has its own ability to make an instinctive response: the migratory flows of its impoverished masses to the North. This flow, which is

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always difficult for any Government to control, could come to undermine the bases for the democratic and social stability in many developed countries. The best proof of this is the resurgence of extreme rightist movements and the outbreak of racial violence and xenophobia in many countries.

These problems and the persistent imbalance between the North and the South highlight a series of essential issues that the Assembly should consider. The first is the democratization of the decision-making processes in the Security Council. This implies a new debate on the veto procedure and an increase in the number of permanent members so as to allow for the representation of the new world realities.

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The new circumstances in the world have been conducive to solving various regional problems, such as those in Angola, Namibia, Central America, Mozambique and Cambodia; to a large extent, in other areas, such as Afghanistan, Western Sahara, South Africa and the Middle East, there are signs, because of the new circumstances, that warrant hope for negotiated solutions to conflicts. Venezuela supports measures designed to achieve peaceful solutions to these problems and hopes that the favourable international climate will help maintain peace.

We also supported the Rio summit on the environment and hope that the decisions adopted there, particularly those related to the problem of financing Agenda 21, will be implemented as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, we give our full support to the Second World Conference on Human Rights, to be held next year, as well as to the forthcoming conferences on population and on the status of women and to the summit on social development.

Despite the endeavours of the United Nations, the outlook is not encouraging. None the less, when all the countries gathered here in the Assembly commit themselves to working for change, for a world where hunger and war have vanished, where the environment is protected, and where realistic measures are adopted to prevent conflicts, then we shall be building the just society of which we have always dreamed.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.